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**Town &  
Country**

January 1953

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## EDITORIAL



TRAVELING in the subway the other day I got into conversation with a fellow passenger, a young woman who was moving with her husband to a smaller city. Subway conversations are unusual (except for arguments over trodden-upon feet) but the woman was greatly agitated and upset. She had been to the smaller city once and as she put it with great scorn, "Their most expensive nightclub doesn't even come up to the Taft!" Such

is the pride of the New Yorker.

We hope for our social sanity that most people use a more important criterion to decide the excellence of a place to live. But sometimes (in all charity) we wonder. It is true that for the past several years there has been an increasing number of articles written on such subjects as the forward-to-the-land movement, space for family living, a good environment for bringing up children, the acquisition of property so that the family can have a certain amount of independence as well as responsibility—but on these subjects there is still a great deal more to be said. To say it (or at least a part of it) is the purpose of our *Town and Country* issue.

We are trying to approach the subject with an attitude of Christian realism. Any movement to decentralization, to forming more humanly-sized communities, to seeing again the values of rural life, is bound to attract some idealists who are not going to take into account the practical difficulties involved. The seed of desire for going back-to-the-land can "spring up too quickly and in time of difficulty wither because it has no roots." And this explains those who return to the city after a short, unsuccessful period of country living. It is true that it may not be every family's vocation to leave the city, but more families should be



doing so. The fact that they are not may be due to any number of reasons; however the reason should not be that they think it requires an heroic nature to make such a move. This is not true. In all honesty we must recognize though that it takes conscious effort to break the spell of the city. One of our writers calls this process "disenchantment," another refers to it as "education." It involves the enfolding of a vision of Christian living, as well as developing the qualities of strength of character and flexibility.

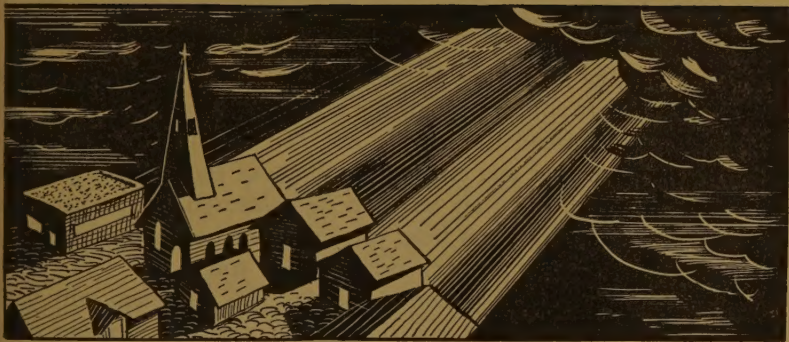
We emphasize that we are not advocating isolation, but genuine community living. That implies the re-birth of the village or the normal-sized town. We are not advocating so much that all people get themselves farms as that they get themselves homesteads. That means a house with sufficient property for the children to play at ease, with room for a garden that will provide food and not be just an ornament. This requirement is generally not met in the typical suburb where people have gone to get away from the sordidness of the city while retaining its sophistication, and where a flock of chickens would be as out-of-place as a flock of children.

The owning of property is not a matter that is beside the point in a discussion of the needs of men, particularly Christian men. Most people can't acquire the spirit of poverty unless they have property. Ordinarily they cannot treasure the material gifts of God unless they have control and responsibility for some of them. The bourgeois indictment of the propertyless—"They never had anything so they don't know how to take care of what they're given"—does have an element of truth. It is difficult to train the young to care for things with reverence and detachment if neither house nor furnishings belong to the family and can be viewed as possessions for whose proper use they are personally responsible. This is not to imply that the ownership of property *by itself*, or the trek from the swollen city to a country town, will automatically bring an increase in holiness. But body and soul should be given space in which to breathe. And it is difficult to do that in the modern city.

\* \* \*

We hope our readers had a merry Christmas. We thank them for the many gift subscriptions, and we should like to wish them all a blessed, grace-laden New Year.

THE EDITOR



## Adjusting to Life in the Country

**A**POSTOLIC couples who are contemplating moving to the country will find the Donaghy's experience most helpful.

**Harry and Kate Donaghy:** When we told friends six years ago that we were going to move to the country, and that we hoped to make our living by a rural law practice, one of the most helpful bits of advice given us by a wise man was that we should tell the country people all the news about ourselves before they could find it out. It was a key to the character of small town living, and it was a key to such an extent that it opened doors for us, and hearts, and even minds to some of our radical ideas.

Because we actually did make our living from the practice of law, it was essential that we did get out and meet people, that we make an effort to understand them and be understood by them, and that we get along together. We had to lose that urban independence that seems to be the birthmark of a New Yorker. We did this to such an extent that we prized as a compliment the remark of a city friend, who observed on one of his visits, that we were getting "hicky." We wanted to absorb the flavor of rural living, and we were very soon wrapped up in our valley and its life.

### the rural apostolate

One of the main reasons we left New York City was the rural apostolate. We had caught the vision, and held the hope that one way to make America strong and rich spiritually was to make rural America Catholic. It is conceded that the strength of a nation is in its grass roots. We had seen in our own families



that by the time the third generation came in the city it was smaller in number and weaker than the stock who were its forebears a century ago on the land.

It is strange to us that to the rural mentality you are almost suspect if you left voluntarily all the allure and opportunity of the city, and chose instead the simple life. To be sure, it is complimentary to them that you chose the village of six hundred people in which to settle, but they want to be reassured often that you like it. And even six years later you must not be impatient when asked, "You wouldn't go back now, would you?"

So to quiet their unspoken suspicions, you tell them why you came to the country. This is a time to be wise as a serpent and simple as a dove. It is a difficult thing to explain the rural apostolate to non-Catholics to whom so many of our simplest terms are another language. So you tell some that the city is no place to raise a family well, and you tell a few others (and you choose these carefully) that every Christian must be an apostle, and that we come as lay apostles to work for our Church by living good Catholic lives.

### **religious conditions**

But with the country Catholic it is another matter. The spiritual atmosphere of the area in which we settled is marked by ignorance. The people in general are paupers in regard to religion, but not through their own fault or energies. Here public devotions and instruction are rare, daily Mass and church services few, and the distance from home to the mission church is far. Yet there is a feeling of belonging; we are closer to pastor and to fellow parishioner than we ever were in our big city parish. Here we ourselves clean and repair the little mission church, its linens and furnishings; we sing with the choir, and we take our turn at teaching classes in Christian Doctrine. So here we feel a real ardor because of our very real service to God. Proportionately there are more at the Sunday communion rail in our rural church than there were at our larger and better organized parish church in the city.

(This was not always the situation, though, in our mission church. If you had wished to receive Communion at Sunday Mass, you were requested to phone the rectory on Saturday night so that the pastor could bring that number of unconsecrated hosts to our Mass from his church twelve miles away. As a rule we were three in number at the Sunday communion rail, until gradually the other parishioners overcame their hesitancy to approach the altar weekly, and now, between a third and a fourth of the

congregation communicate at each Mass. This was brought about in part by constant example, and partly by the influx of other whole families from the city into the parish who swelled our numbers at the rail, but actually it was effected by the unspeakable groanings of the Holy Spirit Who hovers lovingly over our little mission at all seasons.)

Some country Catholics are downright resentful if you outline the ideas of the rural apostolate to them. As one honest parishioner told us years afterwards, she felt insulted that someone from New York should presume to show her how to be a Catholic. Misunderstandings come easily, and the mission to live a contented, active Catholic rural life can become twisted beyond recognition. The people dislike the very term apostle as it somehow brings a personal affront. So the explanations become less vocal and more lived.

We lived Christian joy in feast-day parties. A Mardi-Gras gave us one last fling before the Lenten penances, for it is very human to feast before the fast, and this party helped our young families (and many were mixed marriages) to keep Lent more seriously once we all let off steam together before Ash Wednesday. Soon the custom arose among the families to alternate on holding the feast-day parties, and that spontaneity was a victory, because then other families were teaching without preaching that Christianity is rich living.

### **friends and neighbors**

There is a certain lack of privacy in country living that is at once warm-hearted and disconcerting. Here the sense of St. Paul's words is driven home forcibly, for you learn that we are all members of the Body, and people here are genuinely concerned about you. If you are sick, friends and neighbors bring bowls of baked beans or hot rolls or cakes for the rest of the family who still must eat, and they leave with a bundle of your laundry to do lovingly and often until you recover. A new pregnancy is almost as exciting and as important to them as if the prospective child were a member of each family in the countryside, which indeed it is, St. Paul tells us. This, to the city mentality, borders on being inquisitive and even uncomfortably annoying, but the countryman retains in his very fibre the knowledge that God's answer to "Am I my brother's keeper?" was an emphatic yes.

It is a good thing to be prepared, at least psychologically, for long informal visits from your neighbors or fellow parishioners with their entire families on your one day off, your peaceful Sunday. That day which is, we are told, a foretaste of Heaven. Be-



cause you are a newcomer you are going to be appraised and welcomed in the direct fashion of country people. They like to get their information first hand, and the best way to do this is to come and visit. It is a custom among rural folk to come calling almost before you are settled. So remember that you are apostles, and thank God for such opportunities to live your faith, "using" to quote St. Paul again, "hospitality toward one another."

### **visitors from the city**

A thing that may discourage you, though, is the surplus of relatives and city friends who will visit in the first year. In a way this can be a hardship because of the financial and emotional strain it brings. You think you cannot say no to anyone because here is a potential back-to-the-land family who might join you. Experience teaches that very few are interested in more than a pleasant weekend in the country.

It is hard, too, when parents come with veiled rebukes at the advantages you have thrown away by leaving the city. If the woman has her feet but not her heart in the move to the land, she cannot easily give up seeing her mother or sisters as often as she did in the city. In such cases, in justice to the husband and children and the apostolate (if you are so dedicated), it is wise to ration and restrict these visits, and take comfort—if this leaves you emotionally bankrupt—in the example of the first twelve who left all things to follow Christ. For in no time at all you get caught up in the whirl of socials and civic meetings and school activities and you may some day wonder how you ever could have been lonely in the beginning of your life on the land.

However, in spite of the dangers of being swamped by summer visitors, a guest room should be an integral part of the house in the country. It is something you will need to round out your new life. There is a grand feeling in playing the part of host, and having no urgency to end an evening's visit by the demands of a commuter's train or a snow-storm or a baby-sitter's bill. You can talk all night and into the morning with those friends who can stay over in the Christ room (for "when the guest comes, Christ comes") and you can enjoy the unusual pleasure of long, leisurely meals together as a welcome change to year-round routine. If the meals are in part supplied by your own garden and your own preserving skills, there will be little strain on the grocery bill for your entertaining.

### **the dangers of clannishness**

There is a tendency for former city dwellers to cling together when they settle on the land, to form an elite group, which, for



the apostolate, is a dangerous thing to do. In a way, they set themselves apart and become aloof, not intentionally, but because it is the course of least resistance; it is easier than making new friends among their neighbors. Unintentionally again, they form a community of people and ideas that soon become open to derision. The village is aware of the barrier and after a while gives up trying to befriend them. And what follows is that any apostolic good the community may have accomplished is now lost. They are the light hid under the bushel, the salt without savor. So we must be ready to spread out, absorb the customs and feeling of the place where we settle, and open our doors often if we hope to sell Christianity to the grass roots.

One stumbling block the city Catholic must recognize is the limitations that physical distance puts on social life for his children. Out in the country there is no paved street for the child to run on where he can pick his friends and form his interests, no ready source of playmates to tap when he wants companionship. In a way, the families who leave this willingly are pioneers. The parents must be ready to give of themselves now to their children, to help shape their interests, and to provide creative work and play for them. Above all, the parents must be hospitable and open their homes to neighbors often. There should be periodic family get-togethers, Sundays that are richly rewarding to those groups who come for miles to see each other. Again, we must not be exclusive on these Sundays. The clan does not grow when it sees only relatives. So the non-Catholic family from down the road should be included occasionally or there will be no spreading of the glad gospel tidings.

### **be adjustable**

Other physical adjustments to be made include food, housing, and weather. You will miss the green grocer who always had fresh escarole and purple cabbages and other exotic foods you accepted as commonplace. In the country the food market carries little fresh produce as these are perishable commodities, and the general store here is far removed from the accessible Washington Market. Once we wanted to buy a head of green lettuce, and our grocer told us he would not sell us one even if he did have it, as he knew that our neighbor raised lots of lettuce and would be glad to give us some. On the other hand, because you are in the country you can raise a garden of good things, you can have fresh fish once you locate the good streams, and you can have deer and partridge and rabbit, such delectables found only in high-priced New York restaurants.

When you buy your first home in the country you soon become plumber, painter and carpenter. You learn to be saving of water, and you become acquainted with and respectful of the septic tank and all its moods. In the city, specialists take care of all this, but here you soon have to learn many of the skills connected with the care of a house.

You dress for the weather in our country. In New York we dressed according to the steam-heated office pattern which never jibed with the elements or the subway temperatures. In the first winter of our life in the country we had to attend a real estate closing at a local bank, and we were pleasantly shocked to see the bank president come into his office wearing a red-checked wool shirt, a fur-collared storm coat, and fur-trimmed hat and high warm leather boots, a far cry from Homburg and Chesterfield that is uniform among city bank officials.

### **members of Christ**

You will never make "the four hundred" of the small town you settle in, because you are different and you are not related to the "natives." This should not bother you, because you want to meet the "people" and they are not found in the D.A.R. or the Garden Club, or the two exclusive bridge clubs of the village. It is, however, an absolute duty to join the local civic organizations, such as the P.T.A. where few Catholics attend or are vocal. You belong, too, in the local political arena where even fewer Catholics are represented or interested. And most important of all, you owe physical and spiritual allegiance to parish organizations such as exist. They may not be at all what you enjoyed in the city; the mental stimulus of study groups and debates may be completely absent; but the organizations exist, and you work through them, and above all, with the pastor. He may align you in his own mind with the other crackpots he has seen come and go, but if you serve quietly in the background with love he will recognize and eventually welcome the lay apostle. Here again, be wise and simple, and ask help often from the Virgin most prudent.

The first few years in the country are by no means all feast-day parties and sunshine baskets from the neighbors. There is the cruelty of small town gossip, even coming from the pillars of your own Church, that can malign and hurt sorely. The big lesson you learn from these episodes is that you never before realized how much you desire human respect, and you also wake up to the likelihood that you have done as much to others with idle gossip and snap judgments. So you learn early to take a few steps on the Way of the Cross, and this is a tremendous gift.



Altogether there are major adjustments to make to life in the country, the chief being to accept the fact that you are no longer one of eight million anonymous residents of a teeming metropolis. You are now in the limelight, a new member of a village body with definite responsibilities to the Mystical Body, among these to remember your divine sonship and to behave as royal children of God the Father. In the rural areas where there are very few Catholics this is of supreme importance. Pray, and be sure you are up to this challenge, and up to long separations from friends and families. And even to the loss of unimportant things like the convenience and excitement of the corner delicatessen and Macy's and the foreign movies.

Remember, though, that if you give but your little finger to the Lord, He opens wide His hands over you. "Trust in the Lord, and do good, and dwell in the land, and thou shalt be fed with its riches."

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**THE UPLIFT OF THE PROLETARIAT**

# Flight from the City?

**Ed Willock:** The subject of decentralization (or back to the land) is one that holds interest for two classes of people: those who find the subject entertaining, and those who find the actual situation challenging. It can be safely presumed that nine out of ten who are articulate on the subject have no intention whatever of doing anything about it. It is vital to distinguish between the two types of discussion because material dear to the heart of one group will be looked upon as irrelevant by the other and, of course, vice versa.

Those who pursue the subject as a form of entertainment talk of rural living as though it were an end in itself. Those who are curious because they really intend to move from the city, or at least have grave misgivings as to whether city living is for them, see decentralization as a means to an end. Thus, for example, whereas some imply that the presence of a compost heap on one's acre or the smell of a barn automatically evokes the best in human nature, other devotees of the subject will regard compost heaps as a means for producing cheap and excellent fertilizer and will place barn smells in a similar category with gasoline fumes as environmental nuisances to which the native quickly becomes accustomed.

It is not my intention to wag a scornful finger at those who merely find entertainment in the subject. I merely desire to warn the person who is actually interested in living in the country that much of what has been said about back-to-the-land movements is utterly irrelevant to the practical problem. Two such points of irrelevancy, for example, are (1) the assertion that there is something anachronistic, medieval or old-fashioned about preferring to live in the country rather than on the fringes of industrial installations, and (2) that a Catholic who leaves the city for the country is deserting his apostolic post or (to be European) fleeing his milieu.

## escapists?

The man who has never encountered these two assertions is fortunate, but I am told that such arguments hold weight with many Catholic people who have discussed the matter. The first assertion just is not true. The exodus from large cities has been going on for a long time in this country. As a social movement



**T**HE back-to-the-land movement is often seen as an abandonment of one's apostolic responsibilities. Ed Willock replies to this criticism.

it is utterly contemporary. The population of many of our large cities is decreasing, and a tour through the American countryside reveals a feverish epidemic of house building. More and more people every day are taking to gardening and raising livestock, or engaging in home industries. The sad fact is, however, that this exodus is being made in the main by small families of more-than-average income, leaving behind in the cities the large families of low-income who would benefit much more by such a change. Most of those Catholic couples who have large families are in this category of low-income propertyless city-dwellers. The problem then is to devise a social program by which the families who need them most can find homes and property in the country at prices commensurate with their incomes. Once there, with a little ingenuity, home gardens, livestock, and home industries will supplement their incomes, making it possible to enjoy a more abundant life than could have been possible within the city.

The second assertion—that moving from the city is to desert one's apostolic post—is a glaring example of the common error of applying European norms to the American scene. The average American family changes its place of habitation at a great clip. Almost as frequently do our wage-earners change their jobs. It is rare to find a family all of whose members remain native to a particular town or who gain their livelihood from the same kind of occupation. Within the limits of our vast borders we are a highly nomadic people. Ours is an ever changing milieu. Our personal and family life is a chain of episodes bound together by moving vans and employment agencies. However regrettable this may be it is the fact of the matter. To imply that the spot in which a family currently finds itself is the providential spot in which it should remain is as ridiculous as to assert that the person with whom you happen to be dancing at a masked ball at the stroke of midnight should be made your partner for life.

### **no desert island**

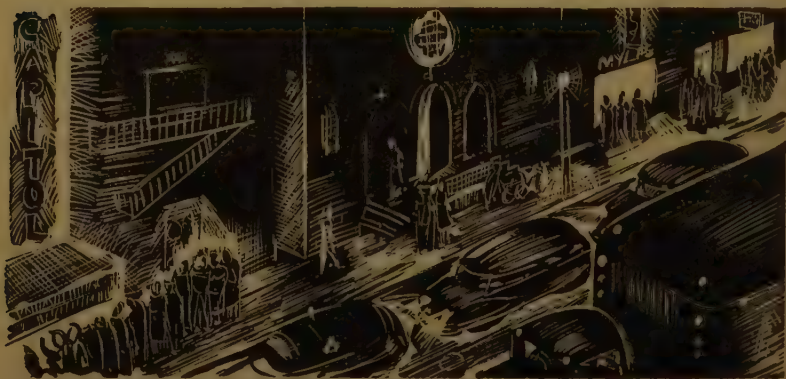
When a family moves from the city the greatest likelihood is that intimacy with neighbors and participation in political, parochial, and social affairs will *increase*. I hasten to add that no one in his right mind advocates that an individual or family should flee the city and take up residence in an isolated retreat

like a voluntary Swiss Family Robinson. The decentralized family will either move to the land in company with others or else move into an already existent rural community. In such places it will soon be discovered that rural people do not tolerate the inbred individuals who "want to be alone." It is far more likely that in the country the individual will find himself in an environment in which he is comprehended and which is comprehensible to him. Perhaps for the first time in his life he will experience the joy of being a man among men rather than being a lonely pebble on a vast beach. In the majority of cases an exodus from the city will not be a fleeing of one's milieu but rather a discovery of neighborliness.

I hold, then, that the arguments of anachronism or desertion of milieu are irrelevant to the practical consideration of moving to the country. To proceed to considerations which I believe *are* relevant, and usually ignored, I wish to discuss four.

### **the romantic aspect**

The revolt against the sordidness of the industrial metropolis began about the same time that thousands of "yokels" took it into their heads to go to the big city and make good. Not infrequently the rural-bound "slicker" would encounter the city-bound "yokel" as they passed, going in opposite directions. Whatever romantic notions they held in regard to their points of destination were held up to the biting ridicule of the disillusioned. Thus it came to be that *romantic* arguments lost disfavor to be replaced by hard economic facts. No one dared say that he admired the countryside for its peace, its robustness, or its beauty. No one dared admit that he loved the city for its hustle, its bright lights, its defiance of elemental nature. Yet I contend that these so-called "romantic"







features are the deciding factors in one's preference. I am convinced that those who have succumbed to the enchantment of bright lights and the society of the herd will never be happy in the country regardless of its more tangible benefits. On the other hand, the person who has fallen in love with the prospect of "man in a landscape" and the sweet-sour taste of elemental nature will never be happy in the city.

Chesterton spoke of his preference for sitting in a field watching the cars go by, rather than sitting in a car watching the fields go by. This kind of preference is what I'm talking about. Anyone is likely to enjoy looking at natural beauty, but the true countryman desires to be touched and affected by nature. Some protection from the elements is desirable, but he who wishes to carry this security to the point of complete insulation so that (in a manner of speaking) he sees nature only through a window will be happy only in the city.

Few facts have been so splendidly defended by empirical evidence as the economic, cultural, familial, social and healthful benefits of life in the fields, yet how few are they who have been convinced? Why? Because (I think) the city enchantment refuses to be dispelled by such arguments. It must be admitted that the variety of merchandise available in the city shop is far more glamorous than the limited monotonous staples grown in one's own garden. It must be admitted that there is a fascination in spending one's day among innumerable strangers which is not the same as seeing the same familiar faces every day in the week. There is a sense of dominion in knocking on the apartment pipes for more heat which is not found in cleaning out one's own ashes. He who can afford a city breakfast of bacon and eggs can wallow

in a sense of accomplishment as he wields his knife and fork, a gratification which the countryman feels bound to share with the chicken and the pig, however humiliating it may be.

The country has its romance and the city has its enchantment, and the price of trying to have both produces the money-conscious dissatisfaction of the suburbs. In the nature of things these delights are alternatives. Which of the two moves one is the deciding factor as to the place where one finds contentment. This is not to imply that one is cut out by nature to be inevitably a city-dweller or a rustic. My point is that—considering the life to which he has become conditioned—the process by which the city-bred is persuaded to go to the land is less a re-education than a disenchantment. The appetites he has acquired will not be gain-said by arguments of health, stability, or economics. His false gods must be shattered one by one. Then he will be receptive to the allurements of the countryside.

## **children**

There is nothing more relative to the subject of decentralization than children. Modern man's hyper-preoccupation with himself and his own times, and his obliviousness of his forebears and those who will come after him, is evidenced in his robbing his children of the normal rights of childhood. The modern industrial city is an externalization of adulthood. The children who are permitted existence are forced to spend their childhood within little ghettos called (laughingly enough) playgrounds. They are the prey of insistent motor cars, irrepressible industry, irate landlords, and property-protecting police. Childhood, much like unemployment, is looked upon as a nuisance which receives the grudging afterthoughts of charitable institutions. The parent is reminded at every turn that his children are a nuisance to everyone. They get in the way of cars, they have no respect for "other people's" property, they overcrowd adult apartments, they cry in church, making it difficult for adults to fall into their pious semi-coma, they reduce property values—in short they are expendable nuisances. Every block has a number of bars, a theatre, a poolroom, a restaurant in which adults can recreate, but for our children there is next to nothing.

If a parent wants space for playing, a home where childhood can be permitted, a shop for repairing the damage they inevitably do, a community where children are regarded as blessings, where else can he get it but in the country? Call it escape if you will, but I prefer to look upon decentralization as the resumption of parental responsibility.



## neighborliness

One historical fact that has contributed a good deal to prejudicing people against country living is that rural life in the United States has been predominantly a Protestant phenomenon. I stress this point for its sociological significance rather than its religious implications. A people who must frequently attend church services tend to live closer together than those for whom church-going is not an essential duty. Thus the phenomenon of widely-scattered farm houses, such as was characteristic of early American rural life, would not have occurred in a Catholic country. This geographical isolation, abhorrent to human nature and intolerable among Catholics because of parochial obligations, need not be characteristic of country living, nor is it characteristic of the European countryside where rural homes nestle like so many chicks around the parish church. Yet it is geographical isolation which many people dread when they think of decentralization—an isolation neither necessary nor advisable.

On the other hand, due to factors of commerce and industry, we have achieved in our cities a geographical concentration of population so intolerable that the most likely response to a neighbor is resentment.

If I may be forgiven the paradox: apartment house dwellers are too close together to be intimate. Problems of traffic alone are so pressing as to leave little time for charitable gestures. Truly, the only way to be generous to one's city neighbor, in most cases, is to get out of his way, relieve him of your presence. And that is precisely what most city neighbors do.

Properly faced, the preservation of the modern city as a social unit springs from no regard for the social nature of the individual. The divine specification that it is not proper for man to be alone cannot be applied, by any stretch of the imagination, to Times Square or other city congestion. The modern city is preserved primarily because it is to the advantage of influential elements to have the support of vast numerical populations. New York City, for example, is preserved primarily because (1) it is a vast labor market, (2) it is a colossal voting block, (3) it has millions of people with money to spend *right outside the shop door*. All human and personal concerns have been made secondary to these numerical advantages.

Thus the city-dweller is far more aware of his proximity to the folks around him as fellow workers, fellow voters and fellow

shoppers than he is to their existence as fellow neighbors. This evil cannot (in my mind) be counteracted by exhortations to neighborliness. Bear in mind the catechism lesson: you must know, love and serve God. Why must we know God? *Because we cannot love anyone we do not know.* The same can be applied here. One cannot love one's city neighbors because there are too many of them to know.

In the country it is possible for the individual family to *know* and to be *known*. The community of which he is part becomes intimate and comprehensible to a rural dweller in a way unexperienced by the city man. If he wishes, he can love; he can be a neighbor to the one who is in need; he can organize with others to the end of the common good; he can stand as a man among men rather than as one insignificant cog enmeshed in the city machine.

### **property**

It is frequently overlooked that to reconcile oneself to congested city living is to reconcile oneself to the perpetuation of mass propertylessness. To accept the industrial city is to admit that nothing can be done to see to it that men satisfy their natural right and desire for property. One need have no other urge than to own land as an incentive for moving to the country. Where else can productive property be acquired? Certainly this is no bucolic fantasy, a search for property!

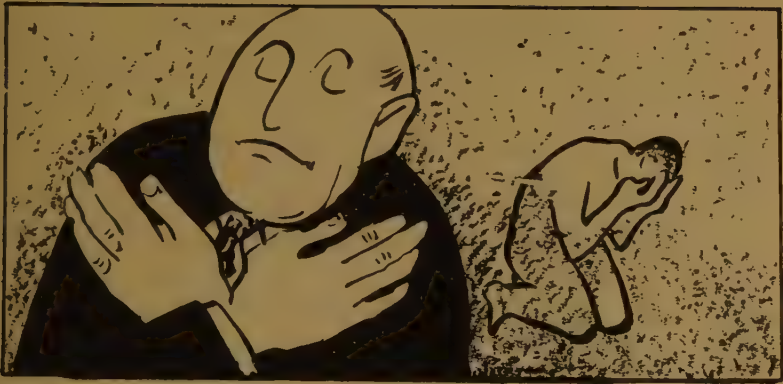
For a Catholic to desire to influence social affairs implies that he must possess an area over which he has some control. If his family is now and forever beholden to a landlord, a boss, a government, subjected always to whatever secular whim may move them, in what fashion can he incarnate Christian ideas of ownership and behavior?

The lone apostle may find property an encumbrance, but the family without property will find it a vocational handicap. It will have to accept an environment over which it has no control.

### **conclusion**

In my experience these arguments of romance, children, neighbor and property take precedence over all matters of timeliness, composting, religious retreat or machinery. Living in the country imposes a logic within which all other matters can be measured adequately.

Decentralization is a logical step toward the rebirth of the human community, the parish, and the town.



## Skid Row

Find You there? How could I know!

I should have understood. Who but Yourself

Could dare the Masquerade? There, at the gutter's edge,

Forsaken, withered, scorned by those who passed,

The stench of soured gin upon his breath,

Cringed the tatterdemalion; son and heir

Turned prodigal, feeding on the husks of swine.

I hurried by, fleeing those scaled eyes.

Yet their stare—had I but seeing seen—was Yours,

Christ in my brother man.

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THEOLOGAINS

O. F. M.

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Walter J. Bado, S.J.



# Town and Country

**John M. Todd:** Praise of traditional rural society is nowadays often put in such a way that it seems to imply that all urban culture is not only of secondary importance as being dependent upon rural society, but is also something with which we can dispense if necessary, a kind of ornament, luxury or superfluity. By contrast, praise of contemporary urban culture often links it up with the latest scientific invention and application to industry and transport, in a way which implies that such inventions alone, or others like them, soon to be expected, are on their own account sufficient to solve all the troubles of our age including those related to the shortages of food, clothing and shelter. The implication here is that rural society is not only secondary to urban society as belonging to a more or less barbaric past which the modern town has outgrown, but is also something with which we can dispense altogether if necessary as a piece of sentiment and a bundle of insubstantial traditions. The first of these two attitudes, then, looks on the town as something to be tolerated for the moment as a place of pleasure for those who are incapable of making their own recreation within their own rural society. The second one equally looks on the countryside as something for those who need an occasional relaxation from their own urban community.

Put in its modern form, this opposition between town and country might seem to be merely the result of an exclusively materialistic outlook. But the difference, and the apparent opposition, are in fact deeply rooted historically, and involve both different articulations of society and noticeably different attitudes to religion. Historians of the middle ages are often high in their praise either of the rural communities of early feudalism or of the guilds in the new towns; this praise usually goes along on the one hand with an emphasis on the self-interest, exclusiveness and ultimately the corruption of the town guilds, and on the other hand with an emphasis on the partial slavery, and the lack of mental culture of the feudal village.

## **hierarchy or equality**

Using this example from history we may develop the apparent opposition, so that it may be all the clearer. In general, then, rural society is a hierarchical traditionalist society with a variety of conventionalized articulation, from its economic arrangements

**T**HE huge modern city may be a monstrous evil, but is urban society itself a bad thing? John Todd, who helps edit a couple of publications in England, compares urban and rural society.

to its political, social and religious activities; there is a multiplicity of duties and obligations connected with each person's position in society; this position is the position in which he is born and in which it is therefore regarded as his vocation to remain. There is to be justice for all according to their stations. And the reference is always ultimately related to the possession and cultivation of land. The society is in fact tied to the land where it lives, and all its activities are conditioned by the cultivation of the land by which it lives. On the other hand the urban community is by contrast an open society; it fosters the career open to talents. The ties of birth are less strong; a man's tools of trade may be used in one place or another, in contrast to a piece of land which ties the countryman to one place. The assumption in the town is an egalitarian one. Privileges, duties and government are regulated by more or less democratic methods. It is a progressive society, always changing itself, always aiming at some new ambition in the sphere of mental culture or physical achievement.

### **religious differences**

The differences which we have suggested also involve different attitudes to religion and apparently mutually exclusive religious habits. This is high-lighted by a remark attributed to a French cardinal that daily Communion never catches on in the country. The implication is that the rural society, being a conservative one following a traditional daily round, always tends to fall back into a pre-Christian pagan past, or at least into a heretical Pelagian attitude, and is incapable of sustained fervor. In this view town religion has a spiritual impact about it which marks it out as the full and authentic religion of God's Church. The daily communicant has a faith and determination to carry his ideals into the world of his work and recreation and family life which is never evident in the countryman.

It is the purpose of this essay to suggest that these two kinds of society are not mutually exclusive, that both the traditional hierarchical and the democratic egalitarian societies are good societies, that they are complementary rather than antagonistic, and should exist side by side, along with their different religious approaches. The test of daily Communion cannot be accepted as a rule of thumb by which to judge the quality of a society's life.

This suggestion is integral with the explanation that both societies are necessary parts of the Body of Christ, that Body being potentially co-terminous with the whole human race. And this explanation is not merely a piece of abstraction, using the idea of the Body of Christ to support an otherwise unwarranted synthesis. The explanation, on the contrary, involves an integral organic sociology.

### **first of all societies**

A true insight both into town society and into rural society will find, then, in each, something essential which is of intrinsic worth and of reciprocal value to the other. We may suggest that rural society is the matrix of all other societies. In it men are getting from the land the food and the materials for clothing and shelter and other goods without which no society can exist. Essentially this rural society is stable, being tied to the land. It is by necessity rooted to the soil which it tills. The social and political framework rises naturally from the family, and becomes by an organic process of proliferation a hierarchical community. The family patriarchy of three or four generations becomes the pattern for society at large.

Religiously man on the land is in contact with the natural world, with creation, with nature "fresh from the hands of God" (Pius XII), and he is in a sense, then, in a directly godly atmosphere. The rhythms and seasons of plants, animals and climate are the direct creations of God; man has adapted these creatures to his use, but their natures remain active in the way that God made them active. And this rhythmical activity is directly echoed in men and women themselves. There is a mutual affinity on the direct and primary level of created natures. And human life becomes involved in the slow rhythm of the land with its natural seasonal climaxes; these coincide to some extent with the climaxes of the liturgy; where there is no precise actual coincidence it is still true that the Church's year has a very close affinity with the year on the land.

### **nature's liturgy**

In a lesser sense a weekly climax is also appropriate. A periodical day of rest is in fact needed, and the scriptural origin of Sunday as the seventh day of rest after six days of work, the work of creation, is obviously fitting. Sunday then comes as a little periodical climax at which man can offer consciously to God all the things he has been working with and will be working with, symbolized so simply in bread and wine. There is no difficulty here for the countryman; no explanation of symbols is



needed; the liturgical emphasis on bread and wine is sufficient. (But where the liturgy has lost or covered up this emphasis—or where the countryman is half a townsman—it will not be so.)

By contrast with the Sunday climax, we may say that daily Communion is not a thing that can be expected in the country. On the one hand country people are busy for long hours with a natural world which does not easily conform itself to a hard and fast daily time-table. On the other, the essentially leisurely rhythm of the land is not conducive to the idea of making special efforts to hurry to church every morning. This is not to suggest that daily Mass and Communion is not in itself a good thing, but that it is not perhaps so easy to achieve nor so needed as in the town. The occasional man or woman with a religious vocation in the country will find time somehow to go to church, but for the rest the ordered hierarchy of society, the knowledge of the priest offering Mass each day in a church probably visible to many during the day's work, the ring of the angelus, the constant contact with God's created world, provide an environment with which grace can easily work, coming as it does to its natural and consciously religious summit each Sunday. This life on the land is also a life under providence, a life of trust and silence. The countryman can do nothing to change the weather, and in the weather he is completely dependent on God. He knows he cannot work unless it is favorable; he knows he cannot change it, save by prayer.

### **made by man**

The town is quite different. There is a real truth in the old saying "God made the country, man made the town." But it is a Christian truth, as well as a piece of pessimism. In the town, man is at his most responsible. "The world" is more easily at work. The protective framework of a traditional and conventional society is not so strong; though it may be more visible, it is for that reason more easily flouted. A spiritual protection is needed. The people of God must gather together frequently, silently, secretly, early in the morning, to assert themselves as partakers of a divine Sacrament.

Urban society is a free and open society where marvellous things are done and great thoughts are thought. There is need of constant help to bring grace into all the circumstances of life. Towns naturally attract men of rapid thought, men of courage and ambition, men who want to achieve something at the limit of human capability. The town itself is the summit of human achievement, and only in it will be found the finest point of man's

work, for in the town alone can be achieved, by the co-operation of many men and women, the circumstances of culture, refinement and education, free from the burden of the daily routine involved in food-growing. And in the town privileges of birth give way more easily to privileges of achievement. The town may be in some measure an attempt at the City of God wherein all men are equal; like a monastery it goes some way toward that ideal stage where natural superiorities and inferiorities are ignored. Urban life is a life of responsibility; the uncertain factor is not the weather, but man himself; and man, unlike the weather, can be controlled; unlike the weather being a free agent he is made to be controlled. It is a life of risk, a life of activity.

### **vice can flourish anywhere**

We have outlined the two societies of country and town, by their virtues. But there is no suggestion that every kind of vice cannot flourish with great ease in either society. The Devil has the whole earth for his habitation. The rural society may become superstitious, or utterly immoral, and its reformation is all the harder for its being a stable immovable society. The urban society may become proud and power-mad, its freedom may become nothing but the freedom to be exploited by a task-master harder than the weather itself; it may forget God altogether.

Our outline of the two societies has been of the most generalized kind; it would be easy to find many facts to contradict it and to show examples of rural society as an egalitarian open society and examples of urban society as a conventionalized hierarchical closed society. But these contradictions will generally be found to show the societies other than at their best. The rural community is not at its best when released from its traditional obligations; nor is the town society at its best when its occupations become subject to highly specialized and exclusive control. But it is here particularly that the idea of the two societies as complementary enters in; if they are both seen as members of the Body of Christ, they will be seen as mutually relieving each other, preventing one another from falling into the extremes of their own natural tendencies, and on the other hand preventing them from rushing by reaction into a type of life essentially unsuited to their environment. This is of great importance for the future. Today there is more contact between man and man, between society and society than ever before; a great danger lies in the possibility of levelling all societies to an equal likeness whether in the service of Marxist communism or Christian democracy. The ruralist who by reaction clings to the conceptions of tradi-

tions which are dead will equally fail to preserve the essential elements of rural society.

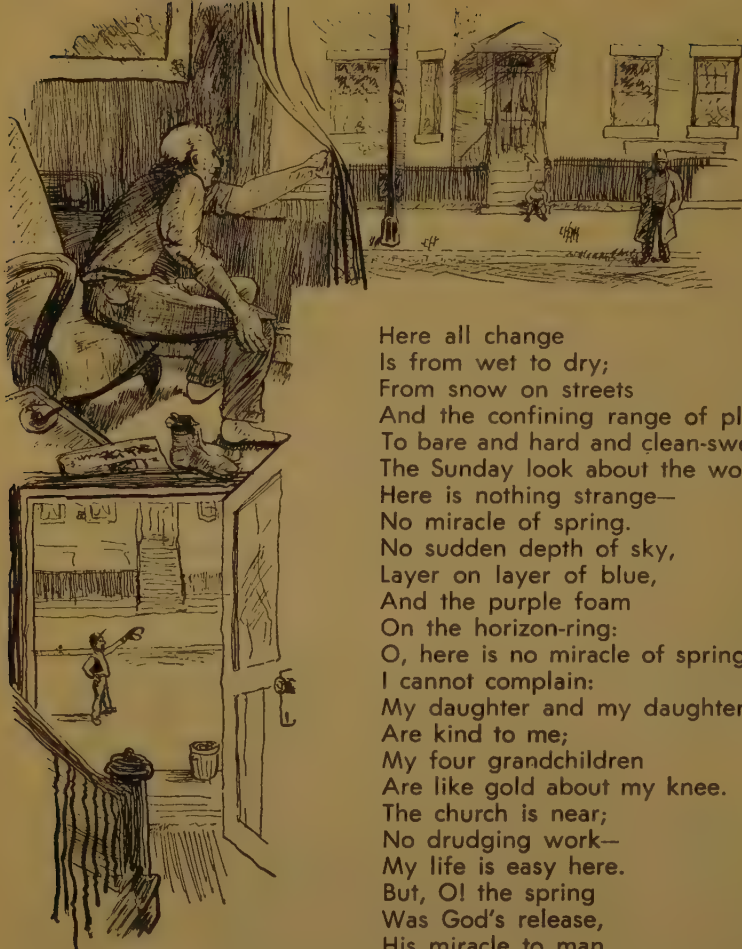
### **co-operation**

Ultimately we must be prepared for anything. Conceptions of co-operation, essentially sympathetic with the conception of the Body of Christ, are perhaps the most powerful social conceptions of the day; co-operation between farmers, co-operation between industrial workers and owners, co-operation between town and country. Co-operation as an essential element in the old rural and urban societies; we must be prepared for it to manifest itself in largely new forms if necessary. The Jewish settlements in Palestine have gone as far as any communities today in the application of new, apparently urban, principles of co-operation to agriculture, though in a way these have been tainted with brutality of one kind and another because the Jewish race remains a race with a lost vocation, and one without an internal principle of balance.

### **the unitive force**

It was from a Jewish community that Christianity grew; and the first Christians became the first *déracinés* (uprooted ones), because they became rooted to a spiritual principle which they were pledged to spread over the world. Since then every priest has become in a way a *déraciné*, but this has not made him urban. Born in the matrix of a human family, he has become the mediator between God and man, and equally the mediator between man and man, between town and country. Through him we may find, in the liturgy of the Church, perhaps the final and most powerful unitive force. The liturgy itself is the action of the Body of Christ. It also preserves within itself all the seasonal rhythms of the natural world which are of the essence of rural life, and it has within it that hierarchical principle which is also so sympathetic to any stable rural community. Yet at the same time it is preaching to us the most profound spiritual teaching on the equality of all men before God, it is forever speaking to us of those eternal conceptions of unity, and forever suggesting to us the philosophical and theological ideas which will fill and over fill the educated mind. It is polished and reverent and precise and has all the refinement which the townsman so loves. It involves a unity of love. It is a unity comprising the whole world, co-terminous potentially with the Body of Christ. It is impossible to reduce the Holy Trinity to anything less than three Persons in one God. So also it is impossible to reduce the Body of Christ to anything less than all men in one Man-God.





Here all change  
 Is from wet to dry;  
 From snow on streets  
 And the confining range of plow,  
 To bare and hard and clean-swept street:  
 The Sunday look about the world.  
 Here is nothing strange—  
 No miracle of spring.  
 No sudden depth of sky,  
 Layer on layer of blue,  
 And the purple foam  
 On the horizon-ring:  
 O, here is no miracle of spring!  
 I cannot complain:  
 My daughter and my daughter's man  
 Are kind to me;  
 My four grandchildren  
 Are like gold about my knee.  
 The church is near;  
 No drudging work—  
 My life is easy here.  
 But, O! the spring  
 Was God's release,  
 His miracle to man.

April,  
 And the good bare ground;  
 The shaggy, sun-warm coat  
 Of last year's grass;  
 The dull-brown,  
 Chocolate-gleaming  
 Fall-plowed fields.  
 About the yard, and by the fence  
 Those scattered hardwood chips,  
 And yellow bleached-out  
 Clots of sawdust,  
 On some scruffy bit  
 Of late, malingering snow.

On the farm there was motion  
 And movement, and life.  
 The Renaissance

*by A. P. Campbell*

# *Farmer Living in Town Views Spring*

Of optimistic self-proclaiming hens,  
That held their loud revivals  
In the yard!  
The homely sounds of horses,  
And the clink  
Of swingle-trees on plow;  
The soft earth  
Balled on your feet.  
And calves and lambs,  
And mares in foal—  
And children all in the game  
Of life.

I dream of the warm, rich sun,  
In the first fair days of May,  
When your wintered soul  
Spread itself to air  
In the breeze,  
Recall man's dignity  
In the sense of work—  
Of something done,  
Of something to do;  
And the good feel of muscles  
Against the rolled-up sleeve.

I'm lonely  
For the talk of men  
On spring:  
Here is no speculation  
On the drying out of fields,  
No gauging of the clover catch,  
No neighborly comparisons,  
Of cropping done  
Or of fields begun to grow.  
Here is the strange talk of games,  
Of the weight of world affairs,  
And the inexhaustible, endless  
Creeping-in of radio.



# The Catholic College...

**W**E could paraphrase a well-known song and say, "How ya gonna keep them down on the farm after they've been to college?" *Brendan O'Grady, who teaches at St. Dunstan's College in Canada discusses education for rural living.*

**Brendan A. O'Grady:** I offer these remarks not as an authority on what is right but as a victim of what is partly wrong. I did not grow up among apple trees, carrots and potatoes, chickens and cattle; I grew up among East Side tenements and midtown department stores, the Consolidated Edison power plant, the New York Steam Company and the Empire State Building. I did not cross fields and shuffle along rural roads to school; I traveled by the Interborough Rapid Transit express from Grand Central to the Bronx. Nor have I milked cows, sown seed, or threshed grain, though I have sorted mail in the world's largest post office, run copy at one of the world's largest newspapers, and taught English and Social Studies at a large metropolitan high school.

The environment of my youth was not organic but mechanistic—one-sidedly so. My limited knowledge of life on the land and rural culture has come from books and lectures, from limited observation and discussion, not from first-hand experience. Yet now—by the grace of God—I find myself in a rural area quite alien to my original training and environment, discussing English literature with college students who have grown up on family farms or in small villages. Not that I have been "uprooted," for one never really has roots in concrete and asphalt; rather, I am like a seed that fell among rocks, but, fortunately, was blown unto good soil. Probably too late.

Though I appear to be making statements rather than asking questions, I insist that my intention in this essay is to pose problems rather than suggest solutions, to ask questions rather than supply answers, to promote discussion rather than pronounce judgment.

## **a spiritual problem**

The problem of the land—like all other major problems confronting the world—is fundamentally spiritual. It is spiritual first, in a negative sense: "rural" values and "rural" virtues have been to a great extent subverted by "urban" standards that prom-



# and the Rural Community

ise greater material prosperity, comfort, and leisure. Among the rural values (things highly esteemed) we may list reasonable freedom and security, private stewardship of property, personal responsibility, spiritually and physically healthful family conditions, and the need for craftsmanship; among the rural virtues (qualities that make for goodness and fulness) we may list a certain poverty of spirit, preservation of human personality in work, normal village social life, awareness of dependence upon God, and the need for co-operation. As people frequently work on the soil without living the full rural life, these values and virtues do not pervade even rural society today; though they are found to some extent (even characterizing many families and some communities) and are admirably suited to—and best preserved in—the needs of rural people and the nature of their work.

The problem of the land is spiritual, secondly, in a positive sense: a widespread Christian restoration may depend largely upon a resurgence of rural life, for, as the axiom states it, "the supernatural presupposes and is built upon the natural." It may be shown statistically that urbanization in a few generations means racial death and spiritual deterioration. Does it not seem reasonable that an enduring revival of Christian spiritual and philosophical principles must find their everyday expression in land, crafts, and co-operation rather than in mass production industry, irresponsible labor, and cut-throat competition or mammoth monopoly? It will be found that, *in the long run*, the best conditions for living are also the best for livelihood and for agricultural production.

It goes without saying, of course, that such generalizations to be valid need not apply to every individual or family, for sanctity is certainly possible in the city and many assembly-line riveters and wealthy industrialists are undoubtedly personally virtuous. The question is not so much one of *personal sanctity* as of *social sanity*: creating the type of community in which the average man—through both his labor and his leisure—may best achieve his sanctification, in which he may best realize and express the fullness of his human nature, in which he may best serve his family, his fellowmen, and his Creator.

Though we assert that the problem of the exodus from the land is basically spiritual, we recognize the fact that it is "occa-

sioned" by a number of mutually inter-active contributing conditions that may be classified as economic, political, philosophical. Promulgating right principles is far short of enough; the actual circumstances of one's everyday life must be made favorable to their practice or they will enjoy neither widespread acceptance nor long-term endurance. Unfavorable surroundings may stifle spiritual aspirations.

### **romanticism versus reality**

This is no time for idle romanticism. There must be a realistic assertion of basic truths, and a realistic application of those truths to past, present, and projected social conditions. To say that we must rediscover the dignity of farming and craftsmanship, and encourage the "forward on the land" movement is *not* to say that we must necessarily return to the medieval ox-cart, live under a thatched roof and read manuscripts by the light of wax tapers; nor is it to say that the isolated farm on the back road, without plumbing or electricity, is the twentieth-century ideal; nor is it to say that large numbers of city dwellers are to migrate to the country—for the vast majority would probably fail in their efforts to earn a livelihood by their own labor on the soil (and thereby become a serious burden to the community) while a few of the more enterprising would probably resort to over-mechanized mass-production plantations which tend to deplete and depopulate the soil (and thereby aggravate the present situation). It *is* to say, however, that a decentralized social order, with sound agriculture, crafts, and co-operatives giving it its *dominant character*, promises greater spiritual well-being, greater national security, greater family protection, increased social stability, social justice, personal and social charity, and a more vigorous and more human culture than the present highly centralized, partly de-humanized, and ever-growing urbanized civilization. It is also to say that rural society should benefit from the best features of "modernization," while avoiding its pitfalls; that is, the latest scientific findings and methods should be intelligently considered and applied, to the benefit of the family-type farm.

### **first the desire**

To be sure, before a more normal social order than the present can come about, there must be at least a *desire* for it. Furthermore, it must have an orderly *theory* to it, on which may be built an integrated *structure*. If the desire is present, it may be encouraged and fostered; if the desire is absent, it may be most difficult, though not impossible, to implant. At the present time the *theory* of this "green revolution" is only crudely formulated, the *structure*

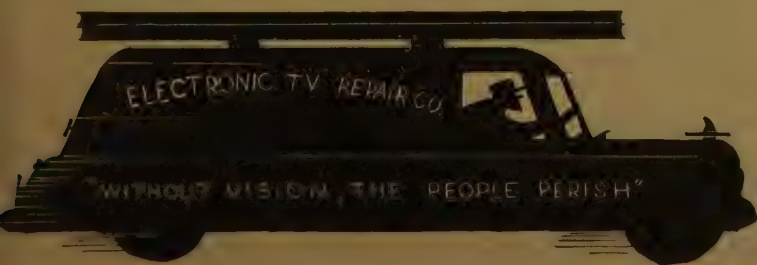
is only fragmentary, and the *desire*, where it is found, is not being sufficiently encouraged; on the contrary, a complexus of forces seem to be working toward its extinction.

Some observers claim that there is really no shortage of people who *desire*, however feebly, to remain on the land. Why then the exodus? Several inter-related factors must be considered.

### **Why people leave the land**

In the first place, many have been *bribed* to leave. It is unfortunate that their faith in themselves and in their way of life should have been so undermined as to accept the bribe; but, on the other hand, it is understandable, for they have been told in a thousand ways, directly and indirectly, that the token wealth of the city is superior to the real wealth of the country, that a salary is more important than the soil, that craftiness will "get you farther" than craftsmanship, that enslavement with leisure is more dignified than independence with labor. The constant bombardment by bourgeois propagandists in our schools (notably insidious in our textbooks), in our massive industries, and in such media of popular enlightenment" as the secular press, motion pictures, advertising, and word-of-mouth was bound in time to take its toll.

In the second place, many willing land workers have been *forced* to leave. Economic activity being largely geared to the city, the wealth of the countryside has been extracted by "middle" men and "top" men, the distributors and the financiers. (The competitive ideal applied to life on the land does not bring satisfactory results; co-operation is the life of agriculture.) Political activity being largely controlled by the "big" men, the "little" men have been widely neglected. Educational activity being largely inspired by and centered in the city, it seems frequently to be the servant of urbanized living. Desirable scientific advances benefiting mainly urban areas, rural people have often been placed at a serious disadvantage. Social legislation and educational plans designed to benefit and re-instate the rural dweller may be coming too late, may be insufficient, or may be improperly conceived;





though they offer at least some hope. Nor is the situation entirely lacking other hopeful signs: the American hierarchy have shown keen interest in urban-rural relations; some "intellectuals" have started movements toward the land; the National Catholic Rural Life Conference has done excellent work among rural people; some enlightened government officials and agencies have been instrumental in improving conditions in rural areas; some educational institutions and individual educators have made significant contributions; and various peoples' organizations, particularly the co-operative movement, have harnessed the strength of rural people and directed it for the benefit of the common good.

### **mutual discouragement**

In the third place, many prospective land workers have been *discouraged* from remaining on the land; rural life in many areas has lost confidence in itself. Lacking a formulated philosophy of rural culture distinct from that "city" view of life to which it must be alien, rural life in many areas also lacks an integrated program, a practical, unified approach to its diversified problems. Its foundation is uncertain and its superstructure is insecure. The function of the farmer and of the craftsman in the modern world has been obscured, the dignity of their callings has been ignored, and they find themselves quite bewildered by it all. Individually disheartened, they frequently discourage one another. This is particularly lamentable in the relationship between parents and children. What a strange world it is in which the very people who are "the backbone of any nation" should suffer from an appalling inferiority complex, and responsible craftsmen should be reduced to impersonal cogs in a vast machine!

In the fourth place, a considerable number of young people leave the land willingly and deliberately because their natural talents and legitimate ambitions find a more suitable outlet in the city. In this category are often found the "best minds" of the rural population. A realistic facing of the problem must necessarily admit a certain leakage—but not a haemorrhage—of professional and non-professional talent from the countryside. At the same time it should be asserted that if these people were to leave their rural homesteads in the spirit of "ambassadors" instead of as "expatriates," their impact on society could be more beneficial than it is at present. There need not be any conflicts that cannot be resolved between the properly functioning urban center and the properly functioning countryside. Urban centers today are not performing their proper functions; the same false standards, strangely, are being embraced by the countryside.

## **Restoration of values**

For these and other reasons some thinkers recognize the need for a rural apostolate dedicated to the restoration of rural values and rural virtues among rural people, dedicated to helping rural people to help themselves, dedicated—in short—to life on the land, a life that respects the dignity of man, the merit of his responsible labor, and the nature of the soil. Only God knows how many generations it will take to achieve such a restoration. But everybody should know that a start can be made today—for a start has already been made.

It must be obvious that there is no single panacea for the urban-rural dilemma. Rather, a combination of forces—educational, economic, cultural, spiritual—working in both the city and in the country must be employed. The Catholic college is one of those available forces. But who will say that Catholic colleges in general have been a conscious, effective force in the restoration of rural life? Some of our colleges, it is true, have made significant contributions to the rural cause, and certain of our Catholic educators have done commendable work for the rural cause; but, as Catholic college education today generally noted for maintaining a balanced attitude toward rural-urban relations, a constructive awareness of the havoc wrought by “the flight from the land”? Catholic colleges have had qualified success to date in propagandizing the papal program of social justice in industry, but have they been as successful in—or as concerned about—propagandizing the principles of rural life that are radically related to exaggerated industrialism and centralism?

## **What is the college doing?**

Catholic colleges (as well as secular institutions) are frequently accused of educating young people, potential leaders, away from the land. Each year, it is said, thousands of young men and young women are taken almost completely out of contact with what they (partly) know through having grown up in it—the countryside; only to become educated for what they (partly) know through having resisted or submitted to it—the city. To be effective such indoctrination need not be, and probably is not, deliberate; but the subjects studied, the “approach” to those subjects, the books used, the outlook of many of the professors, the absence of any conscious rural philosophy, are all subtly effective. What an institution (or a person) fails to espouse often indicates its outlook as clearly as what it openly advocates. Today many parents in rural areas refuse to send their children to college,

Catholic or secular, because it often means that they will not return to the land where they are needed.

Let us suppose that colleges should be intellectual and cultural centers, maintaining a de-centralizing process; that is, attracting students from the widespread community, educating them, and sending them out again to those areas where they can best promote the common good. Is it true that most Catholic colleges actually educate rural youth away from the land, where they are obviously needed? Or have students (or their parents) from rural areas already made this decision themselves before entering college? No doubt, many young people are looking for a "way out" of their rural background, not a "way back" to it, and a college education is a most convenient means of escape.

A sizeable percentage of rural students, however, may be assumed to be "neutral" or undecided, and quite willing to accept the challenge of rural living today if they are adequately prepared. Does the average Catholic college encourage these young people to remain on the land; does it awaken a possibly latent desire to do so? Is there a constructive atmosphere or a deliberate program in which such desires may be nurtured and directed? We mean here not just a sentimental sympathy for the "poor farmer," but an intelligent appreciation of rural life.

### **where are the apostles of rural life?**

Next, what is done for those prospective rural dwellers who may not intend to engage in active, full-time farming, but who would prefer to live and work in the country? Are these young people encouraged to graft themselves onto the rural structure in the villages in occupations conducive to rural well-being, or are they subtly drawn to the over-populated centers to engage in parasitical activities depletive of rural welfare? Professional men, craftsmen, teachers, journalists, leaders in the co-operative organizations, etc., are needed in many rural areas. Why are these areas being deprived of such desirable citizens?

Then we may ask how the farm youth who return to full-time farming fare as a result of a college education. Do they have more pride in specifically rural values and virtues—we mean here *living*, not necessarily producing—as a result of their education? Individual capacities vary, of course, but some relevant generalizations should be possible. It is difficult to see how graduates of many colleges could possibly have developed a greater appreciation of rural life as an intended result of their education; though, if they have studied agricultural subjects, they may have learned some "tricks of the trade" unknown to their fathers. Apostles of rural



life, not only agricultural experts, appear to be needed; and it will take more than a few courses in the sciences of agriculture and a mattering of selections from the romantic poets to develop such postles.

Finally, we may ask how the city-bred youth fare as a result of their college education. Are they who are neither inclined toward nor capable of rural living rendered more appreciative of rural culture, more cognizant of rural problems? In other words, is their social outlook more "balanced" by their understanding of the material and cultural dependence of the nation on its rural population?

### **Is education a solution?**

The potential educational force of the Catholic college for the rural community is partly suggested by the foregoing questions. Some may say that these problems do not come within the normal scope and purpose of the college as now constituted. Others, conceding the validity of these questions, may say that they entail a superadded burden that is too heavy for most of our colleges to carry at the present time. Still others, seeing the urgent as well as the ultimate implications of these problems, may say that a new concept of the college is necessary—a new function, and therefore, a new type of institution.

The third proposition seems meritorious. A partial solution may indeed be discovered in the founding of educational communities on the land and for the land. Such institutions, fired with an apostolic purpose, might serve as an effective reaction against those evils of which the city is now the breeding ground, and as a constructive force for restoring rural life. Young people now "go away" to college; but perhaps it would be better if the college, somehow, were to go to the rural communities. Such structural decentralization, without destroying any real benefits of centralization or compromising the intellectual virtues, does not seem impossible.

Furthermore, this proposed type of college might serve as a "leaven" not only for the secular world but also for existing Catholic institutions that frequently appear trapped by the letter of dubious academic requirements imposed from without rather than freed by the spirit of apostolic purpose nurtured from within. It cannot be expected, of course, that such oases of Catholic culture on the land would revolutionize the present system over-night or even in a few decades; but if they are wisely conceived, carefully conducted, and true to their specific apostolic purpose, they might in time have a widespread and enduring influence.

In the meantime the problem, "What can be done with the existing Catholic institutions," remains.

First of all, it must be admitted that little will be accomplished if the professors lack *belief* in the cause of rural culture. The task here is to impart belief founded on truth, not just to supply factual information; to *educate*, not just *teach*. Catholic educators should be concerned with *formation*, not just information; with *in-forming* the spirit, not just informing the mind. But many will have to start by "forming" themselves for the rural apostolate. This task will take years. Nevertheless some professors in existing institutions may be able to do a great deal today.

It must be affirmed that the art of rural living rather than the science of agriculture should be the concern of the college. Throughout this essay we refer to—without defining—the "liberal arts" college. Other agencies and institutions may deal with problems of *livelihood* while the college concerns itself primarily with *living*: not that the two are completely divorced, but they may be considered as distinct. Training may be considered on the one thing, education another. Therefore that college education preparatory for life (on the land or elsewhere) should be primarily liberal. This is not to be construed as contempt for the vocational; on the contrary, the greatest respect for the vocational may be shown by calling it by its proper name, keeping it in its proper place, ordering it, disciplining it, and directing it to a higher end. Nor are we disparaging in any sense the worthy function of agricultural schools, for technical knowledge is certainly needed.

### **the scholar and the worker**

That ideal rural culture that is at the same time personal and provident, creative, co-operative, and communal, should unite intelligence, labor, and prayer. It is a culture in which head, hand, and heart—intellectual, physical, and spiritual powers—should conspire. Obviously, it is a culture in which the liberal and the vocational must come into harmonious play. The primary purpose of the college should be to provide the liberal education; the training of the intellect, yet—somehow—it might strive to integrate in its curriculum knowledge, skill, and purpose; theory, practice, and spirit.

In the modern world the workshop, the academy, and the church are regarded as necessarily separate departments. Our colleges might do more to combat this secularism by harmonizing in daily practice, if possible, the orders of labor, thought, and faith. What we learn from responsible *making* need not be divorced entirely from what we learn from abstract speculation.

and from faith. Therefore, first-hand acquaintance with practical problems and studies through actual work on the land or at crafts, where possible, may be advisable; academic discussion of aesthetics and craftsmanship might, somehow, be complemented by workshops. This suggestion, of course, presents practical difficulties, not to mention possible heresy (exaggeration of one aspect of the truth, to the detriment of others); but if the idea is worthwhile, wise minds may overcome the difficulties and avoid heresy. An education that is primarily "liberal" need not entirely exclude that which is "vocational." After all, is it not true that creative labor is the highest form of personal and social culture? Catholic colleges must retain the character of institutions of higher learning, but (as a modern social prophet puts it) "the scholar must become a worker, and the worker a scholar." This ideal might be practically pursued to some extent during college years.

One may state the case in this manner: there are three kinds of work—physical, intellectual, and spiritual. While the Catholic college for the rural community should be concerned ultimately with the spiritual (because it is *Catholic*), and should be concerned basically with the intellectual (because it is a *college*), it should not be entirely unconcerned with the physical (because it should attempt to *integrate* the rural student).

What it comes down to is this: if our colleges were to turn out fully-integrated, social-conscious persons, regardless of the locations they choose to follow, many would certainly tend to return to the soil or at least to graft themselves onto the peasantry in useful village occupations. Because this ideal is to some extent being realized, some young scholars are at least *looking*, if not actually *going*, landward; because this ideal is not being sufficiently realized, many more are looking and going cityward.

### **Formation of leaders**

It must be conceded that the tangible results accruing from partial redirection of objectives in Catholic colleges would not be immediately seen, though over the decades they probably would. The principles of the rural restoration would not take hold on *all* students any more than the present emphasis on the urban postulate does; nor would such principles apply to the whole student body in precisely the same way. A happy balance in outlook, however, does seem desirable. You need not have peasants in your parliament to promote the best interests of rural populations, any more than you need mechanics or miners in your government to draw up socially beneficial labor legislation. What you do need in the long run, however, is persons deeply apprecia-



tive of the problems of workers in the factory and in the field; legislators who are Christian social philosophers, lovers of mankind cognizant of the disordered predicament men find themselves in today. The same holds true for all walks of life. The Catholic college can help to develop future leaders with a Christian social philosophy; and part of that philosophy must necessarily include a sound appreciation of rural life.

It may be said that, ultimately, the purpose of the Catholic liberal arts college is not to prepare students for any specific trade or profession—not to turn out doctors, lawyers, engineers, housewives, or farmers—but to help in the building of good and whole human beings; that is, human beings deeply imbued with the vast inheritance of Christian faith and reason, so that they may not only save their own souls but also restore the whole earth to its Christian axis. The restoration of rural life is but one phase of that tremendous overhauling of the world; perhaps not so pressing as some of the other problems, but surely not disconnected from the others. Besides the college, other educative agencies—the family, the grade and high schools, the civic community, and the Church—must contribute their proper share.

Our colleges today might start with a more apostolic approach to the subjects under study, placing more emphasis on such topics as: the *human* as well as the "economic" aspects of industrialism and craftsmanship; the moral as well as the material forces of co-operation; a Christian philosophy of work as well as the Christian argument for the living wage; the philosophy as well as the facts of history. Moreover, it seems that further discussion is needed on such topics as: labor and leisure; active and passive entertainment; technology and the soil; the proper functions of the state; stewardship of property; group action; distributism; the liturgy; Catholic Action; the great Catholic classics; etc. Field trips and guest lecturers should augment the college facilities and faculty; and these, of course, should be accompanied and followed up by selective reading, writing, and group discussion. Rural culture should be studied as a living and therefore changing culture in a traditional and therefore principled order.

### **the college and the community**

The responsibility of the college to the surrounding community is already recognized in some areas, and many successful social projects have been launched through college extension departments. The rural restoration, particularly, may be aided by specialized short courses, publications and public lectures, treating such topics as: farming techniques, consumer co-operatives, pro-

ducer co-operatives, credit unions, farm accounting, some phases of home economics, housing. In this way abstract theory may come to life in concrete programs that are inspired and fostered by the college. Through study clubs and discussion groups, the college extension department may "show the way" to individuals and organizations outside the college; it may provide some research facilities, sponsor guest speakers and other educational programs. It should strive in every way to have social practices conform to moral principles; but it should not become so unduly burdened with details and working plans that its important function of discovering and disseminating principles and ideals is neglected. College extension departments—"adult education for action"—have been and will continue to be a most powerful force in combatting the flight from the land. This is so because they encourage the potentially strongest element in society—the common men—to work together for their own material and cultural betterment.

All this leads us to conclude that the greatest service that the Catholic college can render to the rural community is that of formulating and imparting a Catholic philosophy of rural life. The idea precedes the act. The college must analyze and synthesize, generate and circulate those ideas that will eventually restore unity to the world. Individuals and groups may then begin to erect a sound structure on a solid foundation; and eventually that which is now but a latent and languishing desire may become a patent and potent reality. But this revolution must first have its theory. The scholar and the worker must co-operate—the scholar must go to work, the worker must go to school, and the school must go to the worker—in the restoration of rural life.



My daddy was a farmer—

Lord, what must I do?

Now that I have my Degree

Need I get dirty too?

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## BOOK REVIEWS

### Three Men Write About Women

#### THE SINGLE WOMAN

By John Laurence  
Little Brown, \$3.50

This is the Catholic counterpart of *Living Alone and Like It*, a book of sane realism that advocated donning a party frock when you come home tired and jaded and lonely and drinking sherry on a tray decorated by a rose in bloom. Then you'll never miss either husband or children, the author said! But she married two months after producing her best seller.

It seems a pity in this latest book that so much intelligence, research and common sense on some subjects should be marred by a lack of compassion and—it seems to me—confusion on essentials. The book should prove useful to women who will ultimately marry and are making mistakes in the job of catching a husband. Otherwise go and invest your money in a pair of knitting needles and some wool.

There are few born spinsters. Those who are, prove themselves to be either saints or egotists. The normal average woman is made to have a home, a husband and children. In fact she is made to sacrifice herself to some worthwhile human ideal. I overlook the exceptions—great artists or scientists.

One of Father Laurence's first errors is to confuse the normal with the general. Spinsterhood is general and has been at many epochs. So has the plague, famine and war. Behind the iron curtain concentration camps are a generality; in our civilization birth control and divorce. This does not mean that they are normal or in accord with the natural law.

Then the writer harps on the fact that sex is just the difference that lies between marriage and spinsterhood. But what about a marriage that is badly adjusted physically? Infinite tenderness, companionship and manifold loving services received and rendered can still in mutually accepted sacrifice fulfill a woman. And it is the tender side of marriage for which every woman yearns.

One has constantly the feeling that the author is saying between the lines, "Look at me; these things don't bother me." But there lies his great and fundamental mistake in not giving his spinster audience the means to transcend themselves.

Women are made by God for sacrifice and the capacity for it lies dormant in each of them. But they must be given the real and eternal reason for sacrifice: *the will of God and the love of their fellowmen*. It seems that a priest should take metaphorically in his shepherd's arms all his lonely sheep and strive to fill their empty arms and aching hearts by telling them: This century has sinned hideously against God's creation; love in marriage has been desecrated, the sin of Eve has been reinstated as lawful and good. Great purity must atone for all these offenses. Be loving enough to give up all the love you have hoped for on earth to God and purify the Mystical Body by your chastity. In this rebirth you will find union and procreation. It will be hard and difficult and arduous. But it will be very beautiful and, for so much love, much will be forgiven you.

ANNE TAILLEFER



**WOMAN TODAY**  
By John Fitzsimons  
Sheed & Ward, \$2.50

This book first published in England is a sound study of the causes of "woman's actual distress." The author pictures the disaster which occurred in woman's life with the Industrial Revolution.

For centuries woman had been the irreplaceable queen of the home: center of industrial activity (when almost all the needs of the family were made here), educational institute, recreation center. Then work, education and recreation gradually moved out of the home. Most women, dispossessed of their creative activity, were obliged to share in the work done outside the home, in competition with men, and to the detriment of their specific feminine qualities and activities.

After discussing feminism, its good and its evil, Father Fitzsimons analyzes feminine nature itself. He then discusses women at work—married women first. Apart from the fact mentioned that many women are called at the moment to work because of the critical position of the British economy, we should like to reflect for a while on the other reasons for women working: the necessities of life, the wages of the husband being insufficient to support the family; the materialist greed of certain women wishing to have more than they really need. Quoting the Pope the author says that the remedy, in justice, is the *family wage*. Of course we think the same. And although we agree that the slogan "woman's place is in the home" is in need of some re-interpretation and adaptation to the very different form of society in which we live today, we think that there should be a solution, seemingly more Christian, than the part-time *aide* employment of the mother outside the home, as suggested by Father Fitzsimons. Provided that the husband's wages be sufficient to sustain the household, and supposing that a good and efficient wife and mother really has spare time, could she not devote this time to a *free* contribution to some educational, social or charitable activity? Human conditions are such that there will always be much suffering to be understood and relieved by womanly hearts and skills. For a Christian it should be a natural expression of her love for her brothers, children of the same Father. It would be the best reaction too against the women who seek work only for the sake of more unneeded money. And this could be the modern version of the "irreplaceable function" of the woman to love, heal, console and educate.

To give a few thoughts about the single woman as seen by Father Fitzsimons: the very description of the problems of single women shows that women, as well as men, being created by God "to His image and likeness" cannot find their fulfilment in a work, even in an ideal or an apostolate. The author, a Y.C.W. chaplain, must be familiar with the problem of leaders of Catholic Action growing too old to remain in a youth organization and feeling empty and disorientated! It is only in the companion chosen by God from all eternity, or in God Himself, Who is the perfect fulfilment of human desire, that woman finds happiness. Although by mysterious election God makes it clear very early to some that He is their All, still it is true for every woman that God is her happiness. The single woman should see her state as the expression of God's love for her; only the trustful and happy embracing of His will can give her peaceful stability, and the fecundity for which she has been created.

RITA BARNES

**CHRIST AND WOMANKIND**  
By Peter Ketter, D.D.  
Newman, \$5.00

This book looks as if it would quite dull; there are no catchy subtitles or chapter headings. There is nothing to indicate that it div

into modern problems. The casual page-flipper might get the impression that it is a scholarly, idealistic, impractical work. But he (or most like she) would be quite wrong. Read thoughtfully, this is a book which will not only instruct and inspire but move a person to take the trouble to apply its timeless principles to modern social problems as well as to personal difficulties.

The Catholic student who is taught that Christianity freed woman from degradation and gave her an honorable position may well fail to realize what this means, since in school the evils of the pagan world are passed over euphemistically. A reading of the *Dialogues* of Plato may shock the student into realizing that the Greek idea of love was homosexual and that woman was looked upon merely as a necessary instrument in providing the next generation. In his first section, Father Ketter writes about the position of woman in pre-Christian times and shows that, despite the story of Cornelia and her jewels, at the beginning of the Christian era the Romans were so degenerate that family life was no longer sacred. Woman had attained complete equality in the sense that she could get divorced as many times as men. (One can hardly resist the temptation to draw parallels with our modern pagan world—and this is the thing that makes this book especially interesting. For instance, Father Ketter talks about the exposure of infants in pagan times, and one cannot help connecting it with the abortions in contemporary Sweden where a child is removed from the mother in the sixth month of pregnancy and left to die. Father Ketter wrote his book in Nazi Germany when Nazism was coming to its height and he tactfully suggests the parallel between the training of Spartan women and the prevailing program of gymnastics for German girls.) Even the Jews—who at one time had such heroines as Esther and Judith and Ruth—by the time of Christ regarded woman with scorn, saw her sole justification in bearing children, and did not consider her worthy to share in the mysteries of religion. This preliminary historical background is of inestimable value if we are to understand how revolutionary was Christ's attitude toward woman. The fact for instance that he would speak to a woman in public (which no rabbi would do) and reveal to her His teaching of eternal life emphasized the two-fold redemption He brought to her, both eternal and temporal.

In the second part, the author discusses Christ's gifts to woman: her dignity as virgin, spouse and mother. He makes ample use of quotations from such writers as Gertrude von le Fort and Edith Stein, and the chapters are especially beautiful. He emphasizes (and here again one reads this book against the background of the mad race for babies as cannon-fodder) the dignity of the childless wife (though one cannot help thinking that in modern America it would be better—or at least more natural—if there were a stigma against not having babies, instead of the social stigma against having them). Motherhood (in Catholic Germany pregnancy is known as "the blessed state") is seen to be the culmination of chaste wedlock. Virginity "is freedom . . . is felicitous fulfillment of the deepest aspiration of woman's soul towards the Infinite . . . is the mother earth out of which happy marriages grow."

In the third part, there is a thorough discussion of individual women in the life of Jesus, and the last part of the book is on women in the postolic age. These sections particularly provide abundant material for meditation, as well as giving, seemingly, a liberal scriptural education.

DOROTHY DOHEN

## Mounier's Testament

**PERSONALISM**  
By Emmanuel Mounier  
Grove Press, \$3.50

This brief work is a translation of a posthumously published manuscript of Emmanuel Mounier, who inaugurated the personalist movement in France and edited the review *Esprit*, in which the key positions of personalism were expanded and applied. According to the publisher's announcement, Mounier, in his volume, "bequeaths his last and fullest exposition of the personalist doctrine, of which he was the protagonist." It will be of special value to anyone having access to the complete file of *Esprit*, for Mounier continually refers the reader to special articles that appeared in his review for a more complete statement of personalist positions.

In the closing paragraph of this work, Mounier says: "The positions indicated in these few pages are debatable and subject to revision. For these are not conclusions drawn from the application of a received ideology; they have the free, provisional character of a progressive disclosure of the human predicament in our time."

The reader may legitimately question the statement that "no received ideology" influences the conclusions of this work. In fact, many of them are quite clearly Christian positions that are accepted and not established here. However, it is in the spirit of these concluding words of a great defender of the dignity of man that we wish to discuss the basic theme of personalism as presented by Mounier. Certainly, we welcome the many truthful insights that it contains, we completely sympathize with the aim of the author, but we feel that he has not quite understood what he was trying to do.

In the "Informal Introduction to the Personal Universe," which opens this work, Mounier states: "Personalism is a philosophy... but not a system." It is not entirely clear why Mounier rejects the imputation that personalism is a system. He says: "Moreover, a movement of original reflection should not be too quick to tie up the sheaf of its findings." This suggests that later it will develop into a system. But just previous to that statement we read: "But its central affirmation being the existence of free and creative persons, it introduces into the heart of its construction a principle of unpredictability which excludes any desire for a definite system." Now this is the central affirmation of Mounier's personalism and it not only excludes system from it, it also renders it essentially unphilosophical. Personalism is not a philosophy for the simple reason that the type of understanding it is seeking is incapable of philosophical formulation.

For Mounier the person "is the one reality that we know, and that we are at the same time fashioning from within. Present everywhere, it is *given* nowhere." If so, it escapes philosophical understanding. "It is the living activity of self-creation, of communication and of attachment,



that grasps and knows itself, in the act, as the *movement of becoming personal*." From this aspect the person is known adequately only to God. It is quite legitimate for the human person to try for such understanding of himself and other persons, but it would not be philosophic understanding. Nevertheless, without solid philosophic understanding, such phenomenological knowledge could easily go astray.

There are, Mounier tells us, two ways of expressing the general idea of personalism. "One can proceed from the study of the objective universe, to show that the personal mode of existing is the highest form of existence.... But such a description, in so far as it is objective, can but imperfectly convey a reality which is not primarily objective. Or one may openly live the experiment of personal life, hoping to convert to it a number of others who still live like trees, like animals or like machines."

Obviously the second way is Mounier's. But how does one know one is living "the experiment of personal life"? In the course of this work Mounier enunciates many excellent principles for conducting such an experiment. Where did they come from? Are they solely the "fruit of original reflection"? If so, it is a remarkable coincidence that they sound so much like ancient Christian principles.

The disdain for system may be the cause of the numerous statements throughout the book that are hard to reconcile. Thus on page 4 we read: "According to medieval theology, we cannot normally attain to the highest spiritual realities or to God himself except by thwarting matter, and by the force we exert against it. But in truth this is the Greek contempt for the material, that has been transmitted from century to century down to our own days, under false Christian credentials." On page xi we have already encountered this formal statement: "The personal is the mode of existence proper to man. Nevertheless it has ceaselessly to be attained: consciousness itself can but gradually disengage itself from the mineral, the plant and the animal that weighs it down." And again on page 11: "We bear the weight of its bondage," that is, of the body. Was medieval theology saying anything different; how can one overcome the weight of the body without exerting force against it? We quite agree with Mounier's contention that man is an embodied person, but we can't see that this is the fruit of an original reflection.

What is the reader to make of the following statements, taken from the core of the book, in which the author is trying to express the meaning of person? "Common opinion notwithstanding, the fundamental nature of the person is not originality nor self-knowledge nor individual affirmation. It lies not in separation but in communication." "If the person is from the *beginning*, a movement towards others from another point of view it reveals something else, no less distinctive, the pulsation of a secret life which is the ceaseless spring of its productivity." (Italics added.) "Personal life *begins* with the ability to break contact with the environment, to recollect oneself, to reflect, in order to re-constitute and reunite oneself on one's own center." (Italics added.) May we ask, if the nature of the person lies in communication, how does the personal life begin with breaking off from the environment?

We shall quote one more passage; in it Mounier perfectly expresses the type of understanding he was seeking and it is clearly infra-philosophical. "Integral action is always dialectical. Often it has to keep hold, in obscurity and doubt, of the two ends of a chain that it knows

ot how to rivet, or—for a more active metaphor—of two levers of a machine whose action it cannot harmonize. It must press first one and then the other, trying first tactics and then prophetic witness, engagement and then disengagement, mediation and then rupture of relations; not in an arbitrary alternation of which each movement annuls the one before, but like an engineer with a machine that is out of order, making each adjustment the means to the next, and every time getting it more nearly to working order." This is the type of knowledge that an experienced artist has of his materials; a prudent man, after years of observant living, of himself and his fellows; the saint, after passing through the purifications, of the ways of God; the technician, who knows how the machine should operate, of the causes of its failures. This is the type of knowledge that Emmanuel Mounier gathered, after bravely trying the experiment of a personal life; and it is this type of knowledge that he allows us to share in this final testament.

JAMES M. EGAN, O.P.

## Objective Autobiography

### THE FRUIT IN THE SEED

By Margaret Leigh  
Sheed & Ward, \$2.00

It is not surprising that anyone who has received the marvellous gift of faith should be anxious to share his great experience with others. But one wonders, sometimes, if the authors may not look with horror in later years on the books they wrote before they became "rooted and grounded in the faith." In certain cases, from the reader's point of view, it is surely safe to say that a better and more mature and helpful book could have been written had the authors been content to wait and gain a little perspective on what had happened to them.

Miss Margaret Leigh, now the Carmelite nun Sister Mary of the Trinity, has successfully avoided any of the pitfalls open before the unwary, over-hasty convert, and has written a beautiful, mature little book, remarkable for its almost complete objectivity. Since this is, in the true sense, the story of a conversion, it is a major achievement that the reader feels throughout that it might well have been written about someone other than the author herself. It is this fact which lends the book its unusual charm.

Miss Leigh tells of her childhood, brought up by a devoutly religious Anglo-Catholic mother, of her own strong, half-recognized inclination to prayer in her early girlhood, and of the drift away from any religious feeling, which began in her years as a student at Oxford, and which was to continue until her late middle life. "It is easy to see," she writes, "what was wrong with my religious life. First and foremost, I had no living faith. . . . On the practical side, I suffered from lack of discipline, guidance. . . . Little by little as the earlier graces were withdrawn, I drifted towards the vague, complacent pantheism so congenial to the modern mind. . . . Yet in the core of my being I was still faithful, and suffered accordingly. No one who has experienced even the slightest touch of the love of God can ever become as if he had not; and the memory of it

remains an intolerable anguish." Even in the years of the first World War, when she completely lost what had remained of her religious interest, and was trying to find solace for her pain in music and work, Mil Leigh says, "All this time I was haunted by the figure of Christ. Had someone asked 'Do you believe that Jesus is God?' I should have said 'No, for I am not sure if there is a God.'" The years of her adult life followed, when she tried to find in nature a substitute or synonym for the God she could not find, until at last, when her mother died at the age of eighty years, she began, after thirty years, to say her prayers—an Our Father, and a prayer for the repose of her mother's soul. After this tide of grace swept her irresistibly into the Catholic Church. She discovered Saint John of the Cross and in reading him "regained at one bound the capacity for mental prayer which had gone underground for thirty-five years." Soon after her reception into the Church she was faced with the possibility that God wanted her in Carmel, and at last, not without struggle, she yielded to His will. She speaks of the "limitations" of the life of Carmel, and says that "it came to me that these limitations might be the one thing necessary for the training and scouring of a soul generous up to a point, but deeply in love with its own will."

ANNETTE DAY

## A Married Saint

### WIFE, MOTHER AND MYSTIC

By Albert Bessieres, S.J.  
Newman, \$2.75

It is unfortunate that the life of Blessed Anna-Maria Taigi is so unfamiliar to many of us because she is one of the few married saints who attained perfection during the lifetime of her husband. (Most married women saints survived their husbands and entered convents, leaving their admirers too often with the feeling that religious life alone was responsible for their sanctity.) Born in Siena, she lived most of her sixty-six years in Rome where she became adviser, admonisher and mother to Church dignitaries, royalty and the Roman poor. She was endowed with extraordinary gifts of clairvoyance and prophecy, and she experienced ecstasies and levitations. Her good simple husband and family were sometimes much puzzled by these unconventional manifestations of holiness, yet Domenico Taigi (at times more prudent than the saint's unenlightened confessors) never prevented his wife from carrying out her devotions or severe fasts.

Her life of untold physical and spiritual suffering was offered as expiation for the sins of the Napoleonic era. But though she received the attention and respect of all Rome she never neglected the primary duties of her vocation—obedience and service to her husband and devoted care of her seven children. In the deposition for beatification, the testimony of her husband is—in my opinion—a much more impressive tribute to her sanctity than the praise of all the prelates. For, it was in the "daily round" of duties as a mother and housewife rather than in her prophetic utterances to churchmen that she attained perfection.

Father Bessieres has written an interesting, if sometimes stuffy, account of the life of this wonderful saint.

CECELIA D. GREGORY



## Through Many Eyes

### THE BOOK OF THE SAVIOR

Assembled by F. J. Sheed

Sheed & Ward, \$4.00

To stress Catholicism as a doctrine rather than as a way of life tends to incite a cold legalism, especially in the minds of those more familiar with the law than the spirit of the Church. It is often overlooked that the alternative to this kind of legalism is to place renewed stress upon a personal response to a personal Savior. What better editorial device to such an end, than that chosen by Mr. Sheed: to assemble the wise and poetic testimonies of more than forty great literary minds to various aspects of the Living Christ.

The literary excellence of the assembled pieces has been established long before this, leaving nothing upon which to comment but the process of compilation and the timeliness of such a publication. The ordering of the parts is chronological, following the development of the Church's liturgical year: from the Advent and Birth of Christ, through His public life and Death and then to the end of time as endured in the Mystical life of His Church.

Here is yet another life of Christ, unique however in that it avoids the hyper-subjectivity of a lone biographer, while retaining a personal enthusiasm generated by many articulate souls made one and whole by their common membership in a Body of which Jesus Christ is the Head.

ED WILLOCK

## Married Love

### WHAT GOD HATH JOINED TOGETHER

by Gustave Thibon

Regnery, \$2.50

America for his friendship with Simone Weil than for his personal achievements, Gustave Thibon makes an ardent plea for union of flesh and spirit in married love. Separation of these disparate forces he brands sinful.

A vinegrower and philosopher in France, the author serves in his own being as an emblem of flesh and spirit. Both are united in his prose. Taken in excess, either may become a heady and perilous draught; yet in moderation, each may prove a source of strength and joy. There is a philosophy of the body with which to discipline instinct.

Mr. Thibon's volume should be particularly helpful to those who are bewildered by a civilization which combines pagan notions of physical love with strong tendencies to Jansenism. As to the future of our times, the author is optimistic: "It would seem that amid the ruins of the modern soul, a new unity is seeking the light. The regard of the spirit, the benediction of the spirit, is reaching down into the nethermost depths of nature; man in his entirety is being restored to God."

In striving for unity, Mr. Thibon proceeds, candid self-appraisal is necessary. Human impulses and values must be understood before they can be surpassed. Denial of the body is an untruth, leading to endless frustration. The physical is inferior to the spiritual, but it is also less receptive. One may be a false mystic, but hardly a false stone-mason. Only through genuine self-knowledge is it possible to support a healthy conflict of spirit versus senses; only thus can there be hope that the former,

The title of this profound and human book speaks for itself. Better known in

by virtue of its leadership, will gain victory. And never must conflict become war.

In love and marriage wisdom of choice is essential. Danger lurks in getting drunk on sensual attractions, but it would be folly to despise the physical. As a true Frenchman the author bases some successful choices on reason and advice. He makes a great point of friendship between husband and wife as a bridge between passion and everyday life. But this is not merely the friendship of friends. It must contain an element of mystery—the mystery of deep reserve, inspired by delicacy and a poetic sense of life.

The writer dwells upon faithfulness in marriage and conjugal chastity. He does not believe that debauchery of any sort can produce physical enjoyment and holds that the truly great lover is loyal and pure. The magic element in physical union is a sense, in and through a creature, of the presence of God. To transcend marriage does not signify its renunciation but the finding of a perfect Sacrament, in which one partner dedicates his or her body to the completion of the other and in which both offerings are commingled in a blameless sacrifice to the Creator.

The theme here is not that "they lived happily ever after," but that it takes a long time to build up a happiness which is joy. In a chapter entitled "The Purifying of Love" the reader will learn that wedlock has its night of the spirit and its night of the senses. At such a time, when marriage totters on its foundations, the only help is a great love for the divine essence in man.

Thus runs the first and longer part of the book. The second is filled with maxims covering much of the same ground but adding a good deal of flavor. Feminists may be irritated by Mr. Thibon's tranquil affirmation that from the spiritual point of view man's attitude towards love is higher than woman's. The author is careful to point out that it was Saint Paul's pen, and not his, from which proceeded the line: "Woman was created for man and man for God."

Yet the entire work is permeated with the better Frenchman's respect for woman and his gratitude to her. He bows before her acceptance of sacrifice. During the great Christian era this feeling molded chivalry in men and glory for women. For a husband or son at prayer, with gaze uplifted to the Virgin's effigy, there could be no fulfillment greater than that of dropping his eyes and seeing the reflection in wife or mother of that most beautiful and perfect woman of all earth—the woman whose greatest recorded utterance is: "I am the servant of the Lord."

ANNE TAILLEFER

## Politics

**CATHOLIC POLITICAL THOUGHT**  
Edited by Bela Menczer  
Newman, \$3.75

Once the Catholic has fortified himself in first principles and ultimate causes, he tends to ignore the realm of ex-

perience. The same Catholic uses philosophy against the zealous scriptural quoter, to defend sacred scripture. In science the neophyte apologist in his enthusiasm for formal causes ignores or treats with disdain his friend the scientist's equal fervor and concern with material causation. This is especially true in the area of psychology: philosophical psychology falsely opposed to experimental psychology. The result of all this is that

the unsuspecting apologist is committed to an essentialism which is contrary to the very philosophy he is expounding.

Consequently, when a course in the philosophy of art is given at one of our Catholic universities, the student finds himself discussing the most profound principles of aesthetics without, because of our gimmick-culture, ever having seen a Rouault, listened to Beethoven, or read Gerard Manley Hopkins.

Bela Menczer in his *Catholic Political Thought* avoids these errors by giving us a book in which the principles are wedded to the historical fact. And he shows us in these edited writings what happens in history when a people divorce themselves from tradition and principle in the name of freedom.

This gives us an opportunity to see, in the light (or darkness) of the French Revolution, the reciprocal effect of idea and history. However, because the upheaval was against time-tested principle the tone of the writings assembled here is often prophetic. This is so, because realizing that the choice had been made, the only practical action for these Catholics was to point out the inevitable consequences of that choice.

The book is composed of the writings of nine "Catholic thinkers" with a short sketch of their lives. Added to this is an extremely interesting introduction of approximately sixty pages. Although the book deals with a diversity of subjects, the general theme is "Liberty and Authority." Joseph de Maistre, Vicomte De Bonald, Chateaubriand and Balzac are among the writers presented.

Perhaps the only criticism of the book is that it could have been done in two volumes. The introduction could have been expanded and elaborated, and the excerpts could have been longer. However, as it is, it is a good and necessary book for the Catholic who wishes to be informed both as to principle and fact.

DON CONSIDINE

## BOOK NOTES

Truce has put out (at \$3.50) a shortened edition of the 740-page original *Life of Christ* by Abbot Ricciotti, a scholar whose painstaking research and rare ability are amply demonstrated by this study of Jesus and the Roman-Jewish world in which He lived. The Abbot has expert knowledge of the historical and social background of the times, and as he writes with profound simplicity his biography is both readable and richly detailed. Christ emerges from these pages as a very real and vivid Figure. This book is thus an excellent aid to meditation and, as it is concise and uncomplicated, in many respects it is an ideal one. —HENRY J. LESSEL

Many priests, religious and laymen have expressed the same ideas that are in *Each Hour Remains* (Newman, \$3.00), but no one could have done it quite the same way as this English Carmelite nun. The thoughts she presents have evolved from wide reading, especially on modern Catholicism, and from a deep spiritual life. Recognizing the value of organization and activity in the Church, she stresses the role of individual Christians and the need for contemplatives living in community, in solitude, and in the world. The principal truth which contemplation must emphasize and sustain on earth is the divine transcendence; the principal stories it must help to win are over communism and existentialism. Her



thoughts are discussed informally, almost haphazardly, and her inter-  
subjectivity leads sometimes to rather dubious observations. The book  
is enlivened by fresh anecdotes. —PRISCILLA WILSON

*Letters to an Altar Boy* by Father Rosage (Bruce, \$1.50) lacks humor  
despite the clever illustrations and letter headings. The same pious to-  
ring through to the end is tiresome. Parents of altar boys and potent  
altar boys will find many helpful tips in it, but I can't imagine the book  
being a best seller within the circle of *Candlebeam* subscribers (the Altar  
Boys' Newsletter). —MARIE LYON

*The Spiritual Teaching of Father Steuart, S.J.* (Newman, \$3.00) collected  
by Katharine Kendall and *The Two Voices* (more of Father Steuart's con-  
ferences edited with a memoir by C. C. Martindale, S.J., Newman, \$3.25)  
will be of interest to those who have already benefitted by Father Steuart's  
writings, and to those unfamiliar with his work but who desire to advance  
in holiness. Most of the conferences are on prayer; Father Steuart never  
hesitated to invite his listeners (and readers) to desire and prepare them-  
selves for the gift of contemplation. Father Martindale's memoir is a  
disappointment—mostly negative (dwelling on Father Steuart's faults and  
misgivings about himself) and never giving any positive picture of his  
greatness. This may be implied but such implication is of little help to  
anyone previously unacquainted with him. —DOROTHY DOHERTY

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—(continued on inside back cover)—